REMARKS

Status of case

Claims 1-3, 5-9, and 11-20 are currently pending in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103

Claims 1-4, 7, 8, 10-15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chopra et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,361,411). Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hakamori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,116,997). Claims 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Chopra or Hakamori in view of Sommer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,447,374).

The Chopra reference teaches a chemical-mechanical polishing apparatus with multiple conditioning members. As discussed in the Office Action, the Chopra reference teaches in one embodiment a conditioner having two arms, with each arm carrying a conditioner. The Hakomori reference teaches a chemical-mechanical polishing apparatus with multiple conditioning members (10). Similar to the Chopra reference, the Office Action points out that the Hakomori reference teaches a conditioner having two arms, with each arm carrying a conditioner. Finally, as noted in the Office Action, the Sommer reference teaches a chemical-mechanical polishing system having a disc conditioner, with the disc being gimbaled against the polishing member.

One aspect of the present invention comprises a chemical polishing apparatus which conditions a polishing member using a conditioner. The conditioner includes an arm, with multiple conditioning members attached to the arm, wherein the multiple conditioning members are independently alignable. The differentiating features of the claimed invention are recited as "a conditioner having an arm, with at least two conditioning members being operably connected to the arm, the conditioning members being independently alignable with respect to one another and configured to contact the polishing member" in claim 1, as amended.

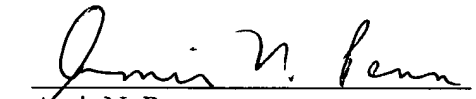
This claimed configuration is in contrast to the prior art, which fails to teach or suggest multiple conditioning members attached to a single arm which are independently alignable. Rather, as noted in the Office Action, the prior art teaches that the chemical-mechanical polishing apparatus includes multiple arms, each arm carrying a conditioner. This multiple arm configuration is the only manner in which the multiple conditioning members may be independently alignable. In order to achieve multiple conditioning members which are

independently alignable, the cited art uses a multiple arm configuration. The prior art is significantly different from the single arm configuration in that a significant amount of additional hardware and control is required for multiple arm configurations. Thus, the claims as currently written are patentable over the cited art.

Summary

Applicants submit that based on the foregoing remarks, the rejections have been traversed, and that the claims are in condition for allowance. Should there be any remaining formalities, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorneys for the Applicants via telephone if such communication would expedite this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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